

WEATHERLY (J. S.) M. D.
J. S. author

ADDRESSES AND REPORTS

READ BEFORE THE

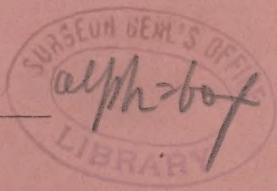
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

OF THE

STATE OF ALABAMA,

AT THE ANNUAL MEETINGS OF 1869 AND 1870.

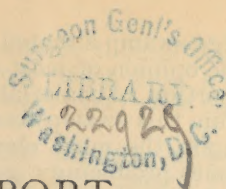
BY J. S. WEATHERLY, M. D., OF MONTGOMERY.



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REPORT

UPON THE DISEASES OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY.

BY J. S. WEATHERLY, M. D., OF MONTGOMERY.

The city of Montgomery, situated upon the east bank of the Alabama river, and surrounded almost entirely by a line of hills, some of them of considerable elevation, presents an admirable situation for a city.

It is easily drained; nature leaving comparatively little to be accomplished by art. Its gently undulating surface is washed clean at every rain, and the filth that might otherwise accumulate and produce sickness, is received and borne rapidly away from us by the swift current of the river. With one exception there is no permanent local cause for the production of disease, and even with that, I feel safe in saying that Montgomery is one of the healthiest cities in the South.

There has been no time during the last fifteen years that our citizens have had any cause for leaving the city on account of sickness. But two epidemics of any kind have occurred during that time: one of break-bone fever and the other of small-pox—both passing off without doing any serious damage. From October until June the weather here is almost always pleasant, rarely too hot or too cold. And there is no good reason why it should not be a safe and pleasant resort for invalids.

Phthisis pulmonalis is rare with us; and, as a general rule, consumptives do remarkably well here.

From June until October it is usually hot and dusty, making it unpleasant for persons who are at liberty to choose for themselves where they will spend their time. But they need not leave on account of sickness, for I believe, on an average, it is as healthy during those months as at any other season of the year. Malarial fevers in the heart of the city are rare at any time; the suburban hills suffering much more than the city itself. The cause referred to above explains this.

There is a large swamp situated about one mile north-east of the city, which, in the opinion of most of our physicians, is productive of the greatest portion of malarial fevers that we do have. The poison arising from this swamp seems to float over the city proper, and to locate upon the more elevated portions of the city and suburbs; sometimes producing a good deal of remittent and intermittent fevers. A few thousand dollars would drain this swamp, and if this was done I have little doubt that our city would compare most favorably, as to health, with any city in the South, or, perhaps, in the Union.

The county of Montgomery since the close of the war has suffered much worse than the city; for, added to the old forms of malarial fever, hemorrhagic malarial fever has made its appearance, and, I am sorry to say, has played sad havoc among some of our best people. This disease is, emphatically, a country fever. I have never seen but one or two cases which originated in the city proper. A great many of our planters who once went to the country for health now come to the city for security. I am happy to state, however, that during the past year this terrible disease has greatly diminished in the country. I have asked several of my country friends to send me reports of diseases prevailing in their localities, but am sorry to state that in no case have they responded. In justice to them I must say, however, that they have had very little sickness of any kind, and that my city friends have also treated me in the same way. Add to this the absence of any epidemic, or any great amount of sickness of any kind, and I hope the Association will excuse the meagreness of my report.

This begins in May last, during which month my record says we had some sickness but generally of a mild type. Catarrhal fevers, in some cases protracted, and in some few brain symptoms supervening. Cholera-morbus, diarrhoea and dysentery also prevailed to some considerable extent. Altogether the tending of diseases during this month was to the *mucus membranes*. May, 1869, was exceedingly cool for the climate, which I suppose is sufficient to account for the prevalence of the form of diseases mentioned above. During the latter part of the month some few cases of *intermittents* sprang up, complicated with dysentery.

June, unlike May, was extremely hot; I think it was the hottest month in the year. The amount of sickness was about the same as the preceding month, with, perhaps, an increase of intermittents and dysentery, and a decrease of catarrhal affections.

July. Very hot and remarkably healthy. A few cases of remittent fevers is all that I find recorded for this month.

August I find noted down as being very hot until the middle of the month, when the weather became unusually pleasant for the season of the year. Some show of our usual Autumnal fevers.

September. Temperature pleasant, though very dry and dusty. Fevers prevailing to some extent, which show a tendency to the continued type, but I believe almost every case terminating favorably.

Towards the last of the month, influenza and catarrhal fevers again began to prevail to some extent; caused, I suppose, by the great amount of dust the people were forced to inhale. I find one case of hæmorrhagic malarial fever recorded in my own practice; also several cases have been reported as occurring in the county.

October. Mild and pleasant, but dry and dusty, no rain of any consequence having fallen for the last two months. Several cases of typhoid fever and typhoid dysentery are recorded for this month, but of mild grade, showing tendency however, to continue for a long time.

The country is reported as being unusually healthy for this month.

November, December and January, are reported as being healthy months. Some pneumonia of severe grade is reported. I think we have had more pneumonia this past winter than for several years. The cases occurring in my own practice have been severe, but none of them have proved fatal.

My treatment has been expectant. I have not blistered any patient for pneumonia this winter. Instead, I have used plasters made with spirits terebinth and mutton-suet or tallow, and jackets made of oiled silk, cut so as to fit the chest closely.

I am well pleased with this method, and I think my patients were even more pleased than I was.

February. We have had an epidemic of measles prevailing, but of a very mild type; two of my cases only thus far have been attended with complications, an irritative fever supervening after the eruption disappeared, lasting in one case for one week, and in the other for about ten days, both recovering.

With this month my report closes, and I can say upon the whole that we have had a very healthy year, and as we have had no epidemic, it has been impossible for me to make a report upon epidemics; and in fact the material to make a report of any kind being so small that I have hardly known how to work it up. Yet, as I had received and accepted the appointment, I was unwilling to let the opportunity pass without an attempt at doing something towards it, however unworthy it may be.

DR. WEATHERLY'S ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF THE STATE OF ALABAMA: Your Constitution having selected the local society over which I have the honor to preside as its Committee of Arrangements, it becomes my pleasing duty on behalf of the physicians of this city and county to welcome you to the Capital of the State. It is indeed gratifying to see so many intelligent faces assembled here to consult not only with regard to the welfare of the profession, but to protect the health and arrange the hygienic means for the safety of the people of Alabama. Although this is only the third meeting of the Association since its reorganization, I am sure the effects of its deliberations have been felt and seen throughout the length and breadth of the State. We have just commenced the great work of reformation and active, living progress, and I hope soon to see the time when the influence of this Association, through its local societies, will be felt by each and all of us; then we will be in a condition not only to protect ourselves from the quacks and mountebanks of the profession but also from the ignorance of the people and legislators, who are not even willing to pay us on an equality with the mechanic and him who tills the soil.

We as a body dispense charity freely, few of us ever turn our backs upon the poor who exact our services. We demand no remuneration for this, but we *do* desire justice and protection against knaves and impostors.

The experience of the world shows that no great good can be accomplished without combined effort. Individual exertion may do a great deal, but the result is obliged to be circumscribed,—to produce great effects we must have concentration and combination of forces.

We want men of intellect imbued with a spirit of progress scattered through the mountains, valleys, and plains of Alabama, to teach the people how to estimate our noble profession, and help us eradicate from our body the poisons of ignorance and quackery that are clinging to our skins, and impeding our march up the hill of science. We have a great work before us, but one, I am sure, that can be accomplished in the course of time. The opinion of the American Medical Association, after an experience of twenty-one years, as expressed at its last meeting, is that the profession of each

State must take the matter of reform into its own hands, and I hope that Alabama will be among the first to show her willingness not only to follow, but if necessary, to lead in the grand work of scientific progress. Let us rather be in the condition of

“—— The man who gets up

A filled guest from the banquet, and drains off his cup;
Sees the last lamp extinguished with cheerfulness, goes
Well content to his bed, and enjoys his repose;

than

“ He who hath supped at the table of kings,
Yet starved in the sight of luxurious things;
Who hath watched the wine flow, by himself but half tasted,
Heard the music yet missed the tune; who hath wasted
One part of life's grand possibilities.”
“ That man will bear with him, be sure, to the end,
A blighted experience, a rancour within;
You may call it a virtue, I call it a sin.”

Let us resolve then to partake of the grand banquet of science, and not stand idle whilst the profession in other places is laboring so nobly for the cause of suffering humanity.

We shall then have no regrets at the course Alabama has pursued with regard to the great question of medical reform now commanding the attention of the profession throughout the world; and when time shall have touched our heads and our hearts, or the silent tomb enclosed our material bodies, let our friends, or those who may come after us, say that we labored well and faithfully for the great cause of truth and science.

Since the Association last met in this city many—yes, *very many* changes have occurred. Most of the gentlemen who then welcomed the Association have passed away.

The learned Bolling, the erudite and gentle Ames, the bold and vigorous Holt, the humorous and pleasant McWhorter, the stern and sterling McLester, and perhaps others, have passed over to the land from whence no representative in person can come. Their spirits may be hovering around us to-day. Others who were here then have gone to distant places, and have made for themselves “a light and landmark on the cliffs of fame.”

A few of the old members are still here. He who was the orator, and was at another time the presiding officer of the Association, is still amongst us, after having progressed steadily until he is alike honored at home and abroad.

The versatile and intellectual Berney and a few others are here,

but most of the places are filled by new men. Even our President is a new man amongst us, but I hope the profession not only of this city, but of the State, will always be willing to honor true merit and worth.

But few, I presume, of the number that assembled here then are here to-day, so that the old familiar faces will not be so much missed on either side. I feel, however, that I can say for the physicians of this city who are here now, that the welcome we extend to you to-day is as warm and generous as that ever extended to any body of men, in any place.

Although we may not be able to entertain you as our brothers of Mobile did last spring, having no college or large hospitals to invite you to, yet we will endeavor to make your stay with us as pleasant and agreeable as possible.

Hoping that you may return to your homes carrying with you kind recollections of our City and our Doctors, I once more bid you a most cordial welcome.

INCREASE OF THE HABIT OF OPIUM-EATING.

I wish to call the attention of this Association to a very alarming and growing evil in the land, and one which appeals directly to the medical profession for aid in its suppression or alleviation. I allude to the abuse of Opium. The evil, I think, is steadily growing, and the consumption of Opium in America is very far ahead of what is needed for medical purposes.

I had intended to prepare some statistics, for the purpose of showing the disproportion between the quantity used and that which is actually needed for the treatment of disease; but I found that I could not possibly do so in the short space of time that I had at my command. At the same time, I did not feel willing to let the opportunity pass of calling the attention of the profession to the subject; particularly as I am convinced that *we* are responsible, in some measure, in a large proportion of cases, for the evil. I fear that the majority of physicians prescribe Opium far too frequently, and for causes too slight to require a remedy that is so powerful—and, I may say, so fascinating—in its effects. And too often we find that our patients do not consult us when they wish it, but prescribe it for themselves. No vice is so attractive, and none more terrible and unyielding when once the victim embraces it. I presume every man who listens to me knows of some household which is saddened by this vice. At first taken for slight pain, probably, they soon learn to like the ecstatic feeling it produces. The roseate hue with which it gilds everything is pleasant to them. They like for the mind to rise above the paltry things of every-day life, and to wander forth in the land of glorious dreams, where everything seems to be possible, and where they are always on the eve of accomplishing some great object. They are ready to exclaim, in the language of the great Opium-eater: "O! just, subtle and mighty Opium! that to the hearts of poor and rich alike, for the wounds that will never heal, and for the 'pangs that tempt the spirit to rebel,' bringest an assuaging balm;—eloquent Opium! that with thy potent rhetoric stealest away the purposes of wrath, and, to the guilty man, for one night, givest back the hopes of his youth, and hands washed pure from blood; and, to the proud man, a brief oblivion from wrongs unredressed, and insults unavenged. That summonest to the chancery of dreams, for the triumphs of suffering

innocence, false witnesses, and confoundest perjury, and dost reverse the sentences of unrighteous judges;—thou buildest upon the bosom of darkness, out of the fantastic imagery of the brain, cities and temples beyond the art of Phidias and Praxitiles,—beyond the splendor of Babylon and Hekatompylos; and ‘from the anarchy of dreaming sleep’ callest into sunny light the faces of long-buried beauties, and the blessed household countenances, cleansed from the ‘dishonors of the grave.’ Thou only givest these gifts to man; and thou hast the keys of Paradise, oh! just, subtle, and mighty Opium!”

But, unfortunately, this ecstatic stage does not last long, and the mind now becomes as unstable as a dream, and sooner or later yields completely to the strong influence of the drug, and is completely and utterly debased; and the poor victim is compelled to exclaim, in the language of the same author quoted above: “But now farewell, a long farewell to happiness, winter or summer! farewell to smiles and laughter! farewell to peace of mind! farewell to hope and tranquil dreams, and to the blessed consolations of sleep.”

The fine castles are gone, the beatific visions have fled, and instead, a fiery dragon is substituted; and the poor victim finds—alas! how often *too late*—that hell has been substituted for heaven, and the gates, “hung with funeral crape,” are barred behind him. He has no power within himself to retreat. “He lies under the weight of an incubus and nightmare; he lies in sight of all he would fain perform, just as a man forcibly confined to his bed by the mortal languor of a relaxing disease, who is compelled to witness injury or outrage offered to some object of his tenderest love—he curses the spell which chains him down from motion; he would lay down his life if he might get up and walk; but he is powerless as an infant, and cannot even attempt to rise.” Added to this state of utter helplessness, the mind now becomes haunted by hideous dreams, which are so frightful as to become realities to the poor sufferer. And acute bodily suffering is not wanting: rheumatism and neuralgia appear; the body becomes bent, and the young become prematurely old; and, at last, death comes to relieve the imprisoned soul from its useless tenement.

Sometimes one of these poor creatures applies to us for help, and we have to turn away, for we feel that there is no help, unless we have complete control of the patient. I once had a patient who took one drachm morphine daily. I succeeded in getting him to reduce it to two grains per day; but he never could summon sufficient courage to cut it off entirely, and in a short time he was back to his drachm per day, and died from the effects of it. I believe he might have been relieved of his infirmity if he had been in a hospital or asylum for special treatment. Thinking of his case, and others which have been brought under my observation—some anx-

ious themselves to abandon the habit, others whose friends were anxious to have them rid of the habit, and knowing the almost impossibility of curing them, unless we could have perfect control in every way of the patient—I thought I would suggest the propriety of this Association petitioning the Legislature to allow the Superintendent of the Insane Asylum, at Tuscaloosa, to set apart a portion of the building for the reception and treatment of Opium-eaters; and, I might add, also inebriates.

Looking to this, I beg leave to introduce the following resolutions:

1. *Resolved*, That a committee of three be appointed to confer with the Superintendent of the Insane Asylum, at Tuscaloosa, in reference to this matter, and also to petition the Legislature to grant authority for the reception and treatment of Opium-eaters and inebriates in that institution.

2. *Resolved*, That the reception of this particular class of patients be subject to the same rules and regulations that govern other patients, but that they be placed in a portion of the building separate from the other patients.

A brief discussion followed, and the resolutions were adopted. Committee:—Drs. Weatherly, Gaines and Searcy.

EXTRACTED FROM THE OCTOBER NUMBER
OF THE
NEW ORLEANS
JOURNAL OF MEDICINE.

MONTGOMERY, ALA., August 29th, 1870.

Prof. Bemiss: My dear Doctor, I have just re-read your most admirable report "To the Faculty of the Medical Department of the University of Louisiana, in regard to the Convention of Medical Teachers."

I think we of the "benighted South" ought to feel especially proud to know that the only representatives having power to bind their respective colleges to any action taken by the Convention looking to improvement in medical education, were from the land, supposed by many, to be steeped in the sloth of ignorance or lazy indifference, toward any effort leading to intellectual advancement.

With one exception, I believe, the schools of the *Crescent City* stood alone, occupying the proud pre-eminence of being ready and willing to move immediately to the most advanced position necessary to elevate the profession of the re-United States.

It shows, also, that the Faculties of the New Orleans Schools are not afraid to be brought in competition with other schools of the country, upon any common platform that might be agreed to between them. I think that this willingness should be commended by all lovers of progress, and by every one who feels any interest in the elevation of our sublime calling, which is made too often to grovel in the mire and dust, by the abominable sins of ignorance and selfishness.

Your action, I have little doubt, will place your school upon the high basis which it deserves, and will still more endear it to the hearts of the people, who feel an interest in everything calculated to elevate this poetic land of ours into an atmosphere purified from vice and ignorance. Particularly will it be felt by those of the profession who feel the deep necessity of bringing the best minds in the country to labor in the cause of a common humanity.

You correctly say, "that some line of demarkation so boldly drawn as to become public to the profession must be established, between those institutions which make their *highest honors covetable*, because they are so really, and those which, on the other hand, seek no higher object than to fill their otherwise empty benches, by unprofessional trimming and trickery, or by under-selling, or gratuitously distributing their tickets."

Some such rule will soon have to be adopted, and will be a powerful stride in the right direction. Students must be made to feel that to become reputable Physicians they must start with diplomas from respectable colleges. It is time that the profession was asserting its rights as to what sort of material is thrust forward to fill its ranks; and we who are already with the armor on, ought to demand that our places shall be filled by men whom we would be willing to take by the hand and call brothers, and wish them God speed in their efforts to ennoble our grand profession.

Since the meeting of the American Medical Association and the Teachers' Convention, the Mobile Faculty has come out under the Quixotic flag of free teaching. This has been a severe blow to the friends of the college, who were anxious to see a flourishing State institution. So much was the profession of the State interested in this institution, that the State Association passed resolutions indorsing it, and pledging its individual members to its support; never dreaming, however, that the faculty *contemplated* placing the college in opposition to every other medical school in the United States. For, if I am not mistaken, in no place outside of Mobile, either in this country or in Europe, will you find a Faculty who propose to teach medicine without just compensation.

I have been astonished at the course pursued by the Mobile Faculty; knowing most of the gentlemen well who compose it. (In fact, I am proud to claim them among the most esteemed of my personal friends.) And knowing them to be men of high culture, morally and socially, I have looked upon their action more in sorrow than in anger, and am disposed to think that it is an error in judgment, and that instead of resulting in great good to the profession, as they no doubt thought, it will result in evil to themselves, to the people, and to the profession.

Of course, in this utilitarian age, men will criticise the motives and sincerity of others who propose to work for nothing, or purely for the love they have for the rising generation; and they will be very apt to say that what is not worth paying for, is scarcely worth having.

I presume that no one would object to free education if it could be arranged in a practical way. But the idea of free education, as generally understood, is simply ridiculous. Some one has it to pay for, and I have yet to hear of a free school whose teachers did not receive satisfactory remuneration, either from the government or from the students themselves. These gentlemen may

have the abstract right to do what they have done ; and so I might have some sort of right to practice my profession without charge, but I should expect to have other worthy physicians in the place condemn the action as unjust to themselves, and calculated to lower the dignity of a profession which we are all equally bound to sustain. Some may say that it does not concern any particular individual. But I think that every physician ought to feel interest enough in his profession to speak out, when anything occurs which is calculated to cast a shadow over its purity or well being.

I will not, as I have said, impugn the motives of these gentlemen, but I most sincerely regret the action they have thought proper to take, as one that will in all probability retard the onward march of the profession in this State toward that perfection, which all good men must wish to see attained.

Most respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

J. S. WEATHERLY.



Mr. Frank, P. Poichet

Charleston

S. C.